

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 8-10 and 13-15 are amended, and claims 16-20 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 8-10 and 13-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 8-10 and 13-15 are amended, as suggested by the Examiner, to obviate the rejection. These amendments for correcting informalities are not intended to change the scope of the claims and therefore are non-narrowing. Accordingly, the patentability of the claims is not affected by these amendments. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

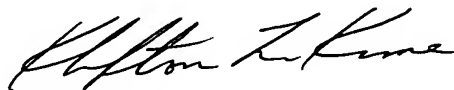
The Office Action rejects claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,671,476 to Saiki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,733,945 to Hirota et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Saiki is only qualified as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)/103. Applicants respectfully submit that Saiki was owned by the applicant of this application at the time of the invention of this application. The Japanese counterpart of Saiki is not qualified as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) or (b). Therefore, Saiki cannot be prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103(c). According, this rejection is improper. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-15 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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